

Amendments to the Drawings:

Attached are replacement sheets for Figs. 1A-7 of the drawings. The attached sheets are formal drawings prepared by a draftsman. No new matter has been added by way of these amendments.

REMARKS

The above amendment with the following remarks is submitted to be fully responsive to the Office Action of April 17, 2006. Reconsideration of this application in light of the amendment and the allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-20 were pending in the present application prior to the above amendment. In response to the Office Action, claims 1, 5, 6, 15 and 17 have been amended, and claims 11 and 12 have been cancelled. Therefore, claims 1-10 and 13-20 are still pending in the present application and are believed to be in proper condition for allowance.

Referring to the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-6, 16 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,796,543 by Haeberer et al. which discloses a hydraulic damping chamber containing fuel that is used to counteract the movement of an armature plate. In response to the Office Action, independent claim 1 has been amended to recite that the valve device includes a valve guide (47). As apart of the valve device, the valve guide may be specially designed to control fluid flow through the fuel passage. (See Specification ¶35). In addition, independent claims 1 and 17 have been amended to recite the inclusion of a fluid film gap positioned between the retainer and the valve guide. (See Specification ¶44). Clearly, the cited Haeberer et al. reference fails to disclose the flow control valve as claimed. In addition, since claims 2-6 and 16 are dependent on independent claim 1, the rejection of these claims is believed to be rendered moot in view of the amendments to independent claim 1. Therefore, in view of the above amendments, the withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested with respect to claims 1-6, 16 and 17.

Referring again to the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-4 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,688,579 to Grytz

which discloses a hydraulic damping chamber formed between an overtravel stop and an armature plate (28). This rejection is believed to be rendered moot in view of the amendments to independent claim 1 above, Grytz failing to disclose, teach, or otherwise suggest the flow control valve as claimed. Therefore, the withdrawal of this rejection with respect to claims 1-4 and 16 based on Grytz is respectfully requested.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-4 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,056,264 to Benson et al., the Examiner asserting that Benson et al. discloses all of the recited limitations of independent claim 1. However, this rejection is also believed to be rendered moot in view of the above amendments to independent claim 1 which now specifically requires a fluid film gap positioned between a retainer and valve guide. Clearly, Benson et al. fails to disclose, teach, or otherwise suggest the invention as claimed. Therefore, the withdrawal of this rejection with respect to claims 1-4 is respectfully requested.

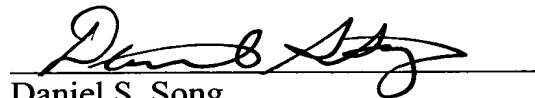
Referring again to the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 5-7, 9-12, 15, 17, and 18 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,056,264 to Benson et al. in view of U.S. Patent Application No. 2003/0062492 to Haeberer et al. Whereas this rejection is believed to be rendered moot with respect to claims 5-7, 9-12 and 15 in view of the amendments to independent claim 1 from which they ultimately depend, the Applicants respectfully contend that the rejection of at least claim 12 is improper for the reasons set forth herein below. Benson et al. discloses a fluid gap located between the shim (70) and the armature stop (66). (Col. 5 lines 57-58). Additionally, the '492 Haeberer et al. application discloses a hydraulic damping element located between armature plate (20.1) and support element (22). However, neither reference discloses a fluid film gap that is positioned between a retainer and valve guide as specifically recited in claim 12. Moreover, in neither reference does the shape of a valve guide even allow for such dampening between the valve guide and the retainer. Thus, even if these references are combined in the manner suggested by the Examiner, they still fail to result in the flow control valve of claim 12. However, as noted above,

to expedite the prosecution of the present application, claim 1 has been amended to include the position of the fluid film gap as recited in claim 12. Correspondingly, claim 12 has been cancelled.

In response to the Examiner's rejection of claim 17 based on Benson et al. in view of the '492 Haeberer et al. application, claim 17 has also been amended to recite the location of the fluid film gap. Thus, for the reasons mentioned above, withdrawal of the rejection of claim 17 as well as claim 18 dependent thereon is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is respectfully requested. However, if the Examiner deems that any issue remains after considering this response, he is invited to call the undersigned to expedite the prosecution and work out any such issue by telephone.

Respectfully submitted,



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